

Disclaimer: I do not own Harry Potter

I will be brief with my annotations, in this fic I will try to use a rather seldom used setting with a ancient Roman background. I know that not everything will be 100% correct, I will try to stay to the facts of the ancient cultures used in this fic, but I know there will be mistakes, my last latin lessons have been quite some time ago. Oh well give it at least a chance...

And yes there will the common theme involved where Harry is not the BWL, believe me this is not like 99% of the wrong/different bwl stories.

Ancient Legacy

Chapter 1: Praetorian

In the year 1981 the wizarding world celebrated the downfall of the most feared dark lord in recent history. The dark lord Voldemort had been vanquished by a little girl. One year old Erica Potter not just survived the killing curse that should have ended her life, but also rebounded it towards Voldemort, defeating him in the process. The traitor who lead the dark lord to the child barely managed to flee the scene, but was apprehended only a few days later. The entire Potter family became famous over night, celebrated by the masses and hated by the remaining followers of the dark lord.

Grudgingly the family had accepted the advise of Albus Dumbledore and returned to hiding, at least until the rest of the Death Eaters, the dark lord's followers, were either caught or dead. To guarantee the survival of the Potter family they also allowed their oldest child, their son Harry to be taken to a different location by Dumbledore. As the heir of their family he would also be hidden, protected by others, while his parents took care of his young sister.

Albus took the three year old boy far away from Britain, hiding him with old acquaintances of his. A group of people he met by accident during his fight against Grindelwald. He entrusted the boy to a family that lived in a purely magical society hidden from the world. He did so knowing that there would be nearly no way to retrieve the boy if these people would not allow it, in fact he wanted the boy to be kept away from his family. Separating the Potter siblings would work in his favor, it could have become troublesome for his plans if Erica

would become too reliant on an older sibling. The boy could turn dark and Merlin knows what would happen to Erica then. At least that was the explanation he planned to offer. In truth he wanted the girl to rely on him alone, not some brother. Her parents would already be too much of a negative influence for the old wizard's plans to permanently defeat the dark lord should he return in the future.

Ten years later the Potter's finally returned to the wizarding world, the time of hiding had come to an end with the year that Erica would start her education at Hogwarts. It would also mark the day the Potter's expected to be reunited with their son, but alas all they got was an apologetic Albus Dumbledore, claiming that the boy had disappeared years ago without a trace.

Harry grew up different from the standards of magical Britain. Adopted into the patrician Nerva family on the hidden island nation Arkadia Nova (1). Renamed as Hadrianus Aurelius Nerva he attends the local magical school, the 'Schola Magica', the place where all arkadian children learn all they need to know to serve the Arkadian Emperor and his family. The remnants of the former roman empire shaped all their lives and Harry or to be more precise Hadrian would be forever linked to his new home. His former family had become a distant memory, never completely forgotten, but unimportant for his way of life at this moment.

On Arkadia Nova life went by undisturbed by the political and cultural problems of the rest of Europe's magical communities, for Hadrian this meant a peaceful childhood, at least until he finally would reach the age of sixteen and become eligible to serve the Emperor. With his birthday near the time had come for Hadrian to leave Arkadia for the first time and return to Europe's wizarding world.

"Hadrian, walk with me. There are things we need to discuss." The elderly teacher looked sternly at his young student before he walked away without waiting for a response.

"Yes, magister." The boy replied respectfully. Without hesitation Hadrian followed the man, his curiosity spiked.

They slowly walked down the corridors of the school, passing a few stray students or other magisters on their way. Through large

windows the late afternoon sun bathed the long corridor in an bright light, the white marble floors reflecting the light dully.

"Hadrian as you know you are due to enter our Emperors service soon. It doesn't matter how many years of education you have left at this school, you are expected to serve in an way befitting your family. Your older brother is currently one of the Aediles (2), is he not?" Not once while he spoke the old man looked at his student.

"Yes, magister. He had been elected this spring and is currently busy preparing the celebrations for the Diana festival next month." Hadrian spoke with a bit of pride in his voice. His brother always was the first to help him should he have any problem and Julius never treated Hadrian any less just because he was adopted. This caused Hadrian to be fiercely loyal to his brother which showed when Hadrian vowed to aid his brothers political rise in every way possible to him.

"A the festival of the hunt, has it already been five years since the last..." The old magister fell silent in deep contemplation after that. "Oh well. My point here is that you need to find an fitting occupation. You are one of our best students when it comes to fighting and diplomacy."

"Thank you, magister. I always strife to be the best..." Before Hadrian could continue he was interrupted by the older man.

"Unfortunately that cannot be said about your other more scientific subjects. You only focus on your natural strengths and completely disregard your own weaknesses." The magister spoke harshly to his student. "This will be a problem in the future, that I am sure. But alas we cannot fix that at the moment."

Hadrian looked out of the window as they continued walking, not really daring to see if his mentors facial expression was as harsh as his words. He really tried to do well in all subjects at the beginning of his schooling, but he found it far too tiresome to even try to excel in all of his studies. But of course his failings in some subjects had been problematic before, especially as his father learned of his sons problems. Julius just laughed about it, calming their father by saying that Hadrian may have never been intended to follow them into politics.

"Considering your current strengths I have taken the liberty to recommend you for a certain career. Your father has also approved of my choice." At this Hadrian looked at the magister waiting for him to continue. The man had stopped walking by now and had turned around looking at his student with his ever stern expression on his face. "I am old, Hadrian, and I have seen generations of students enter and leave the halls of this school. I know talent when I see it and you have talent for only one future. The military. Considering your family I have recommended you for service as a Praetorian (3)."

Hadrian's face lit up when he heard that. He would become a member of the Emperor's personal guard. Those chosen men and women that would work only for the Emperor, traveling the world to fulfill their regent's orders. "Thank you, magister. I can't even begin to show you how grateful I am for your faith in me to offer me such a chance." He was almost bouncing, but years of training on how to behave as a patrician (4) had long broken him out of such childish mannerisms.

"Don't be hasty with your celebrations, Hadrian. You will have to pass the test first. No one enters the Praetorian's just because he was recommended for it. You will report to Nero Verturia first thing tomorrow. He will provide you with the details of your test and will judge whether or not you are worthy to be a Praetorian."

"Of course. I will do my utmost to justify the faith you have in my abilities. I will complete this test flawlessly." The conviction in the young boy's voice was almost convincing, but the old wizard knew his student well enough to see the slight note of nervousness in the boy's tone and eyes. Not long after they parted, the magister returned to his office and Hadrian returned home to share the news with his mother.

In Britain the Potter family enjoyed their sparse time together. Only during the summer breaks the Potters got a chance to see their daughter, because Albus Dumbledore insisted that their daughter should stay at school during the short winter break for special tutoring from him and some of his teachers. So they only got the summer months to spend together. And much to Dumbledore's chagrin they had decided to leave their home this summer to spend some time in southern France. A nice little vacation with their closest

family friends before they would visit the Quidditch World Cup at the end of August.

"Lily are you really sure you packed everything you will need? I mean there are still some things left in the house." James Potter watched as his wife tried to close another suitcase the muggle way by sitting on it to get it closed. She glared at her husband before she returned her attention to the blasted suitcase before it shut with a click and much to her relieve stayed shut.

"If you have time to make fun of me I should make sure you are properly occupied with work once we come back from the holiday. I know quite a few things you could do instead of running off to that Quidditch cup." She tipped her finger against her chin in fake contemplation, causing her husband to gulp.

"Now don't be hasty, Lily. We all need this holiday, so we shouldn't make such decision before we are back." He looked around for an quick escape and to his luck it was just this moment that he heard someone at the front door. "Ah, looks like Padfoot and his family are here. I will just go and greet them." He retreated hastily from the room, much to his wife's amusement.

Downstairs he saw his best friend already inside the main hall of the house waiting with his wife and two sons. "Heya, James. Ready to go and have some fun with the ickle Frenchies?"

James just grinned as he saw his friend getting a stern look from his wife. Both their wife's had joined forces to exorcise all things marauder from their men, though they had little success so far. "Sure, Padfoot. Lily should be down any moment. Erica should be waiting in the living room."

Sirius quickly sent his boys to join the young Potter girl, leaving just the adults in the entrance hall. His wife soon followed their sons, leaving the men alone to talk. "How is Erica? Has she gotten over the shock last month?"

"As well as anyone would cope with seeing someone getting the kiss from a Dementor. She is especially problematic with these beasts, she always relives the night of the attack and the disappearance of her brother when these beasts are near. I think the whole kiss thing is less of a problem for her." James looked sadly in

the direction of the living room as he spoke, not seeing Sirius grim look.

"Well no one would really be sad about Bellatrix passing (5). The stupid bitch had it coming. Fleeing prison to try to murder Erica. I'm glad she is gone now to be truthful. Gives me some peace of mind to know that she is gone for good. I just hope this will be Erica's last encounter with Death Eaters."

"Yeah. I hope so, too, Sirius. She needs this holiday even more then we do. With the whole Dementor business she is back to blaming herself for Harry's disappearance." James sighed sadly. "Dumbledore be damned, he was against us leaving Potter Manor during the holidays, too much of a risk he says. I already lost my son because of his decisions, I won't make my daughter into a prisoner in her own home. Bellatrix was a single case. There are no more Death Eaters out for her blood. The old man is just paranoid these days."

They were silent for a few more moments before Lily came down from upstairs, two more suitcases floating behind her. "All ready to go, James?" She looked with an arched eyebrow at the two unusually quiet men in the room.

"Sure, Lily. Let's just get the kids and Helena, they are waiting in the living room. Then we are all set to leave."

Hadrian was rather nervous as he entered the Praetorian garrison in the city's imperial district. The two guards at the entrance regarded him with almost impassive, unreadable faces as he handed one of them the scroll with his summoning to meet the officer Nero Verturia. With a few instructions on where to find the man, Hadrian entered the large building, quickly passing the atrium. As he followed a corridor towards Verturia's office he passed several open training rooms, the soldiers inside training relentlessly for their daily duties. In some rooms they were fighting hand to hand, in other rooms they were dueling with swords or their magical abilities. The level of skill and mastery of the fighting arts left Hadrian in awe, but he had no time to stay and watch.

He sighed relieved when he finally found the door with the name-tag N. Verturia. He was somewhat amazed that he did not get lost on his way here. There were so many corridors and doors. But now he

was here, there was no going back. He knocked curtly on the door, waiting for a reply from the inside, which came rather quick.

Inside the office sat a man with extremely short black hair, wearing the uniform of a high ranking officer. The man looked up from a report on his desk, looking rather surprised to see the boy entering the room.

"Sir, I have come as ordered to take the test to proof my worthiness to join the Praetorian Guard." Hadrian did not know whether he should salute or bow or show any other gesture of respect to the man so he opted to just stand still and wait for orders.

"Ah yes. Hadrianus Nerva. I must admit I did not expect you to be here so soon. I ordered the guards to send you the long way here, past all training rooms." Verturia chuckled at something Hadrian did not quite understand before he continued. "Well you getting here was the first of many test I have you for. For the first test... well you passed that. Far better then the last few hopefuls. Most get lost on their way or stop to watch the training. Those are often deemed unfit for certain reasons. Punctuality and concentration on the task at hand are very important to an Praetorian. You showed both in abundance already, very good Hadrian."

"Thank you, sir." Hadrian looked relieved that he had already passed the first test, one he didn't even know he was taking.

With a fluent motion Verturia stood up from his desk, throwing the folder he was reading before at the youngster. "Okay, now that you are here it is time for us to get to work. Look at the orders." Verturia waited for some moments, giving Hadrian time to read the orders himself before he would elaborate on the next test. "We will visit the continent. A nice little retrieval mission for the Emperor. On his orders the Praetorians are traveling half of the world in an attempt to find artifacts of an ancient culture. We have located one of these artifacts and you Hadrian will come along and help me retrieve it." He saw Hadrian nod in understanding before the boy started asking questions.

"Are we expecting any hostiles, sir? These orders say full combat equipment. Sword, gun, the entire armor. It even permits the use of lethal magic in case of a fight. Are we going to fight for this artifact?"

Verturia showed a feral grin as he heard the questions. "And there you pass my second test, reading your orders closely and understanding what you read." Hadrian looked a bit baffled at that. "Yes, we expect that the persons that currently possess the item will not part with it peacefully. But don't worry, as far as we know the majority of those people will be muggles, there are only three wizards with them that we will have to watch closely." Again Hadrian nodded in understanding, something that pleased Verturia, a boy that understood and only asked the necessary questions. "Alright, you will be provided with everything you need for this mission. Go change we will leave for Marseille's magical quarter in one hour. The man outside will lead you to the locker rooms and give you your equipment."

"Yes, sir." Hadrian placed the folder back on the desk and quickly left the room, finding another rather short man there already waiting for him. Verturia meanwhile just grinned to himself. For the first time since the Praetorian Prefect (6) had placed him on this godforsaken post did he get a rather interesting candidate to test. Hadrian had potential, that much was obvious. But to what extent Verturia could use the boy to further his own rise through the ranks was unclear at the moment.

Nearly an hour later Hadrian met Verturia back in the courtyard, they were both wearing the Praetorian standard combat uniform completely made out of dragon hide and other indefinable materials. The outfit was mostly black with different golden ornaments, though both their uniforms looked exactly the same, much to Hadrian's astonishment.

"Sir, why exactly do we wear the same uniform? I am not even a recruit and you are an officer, shouldn't there be any differentiation for ranks and such?" His question only caused the man to chuckle.

"No, Hadrian. On missions we conceal our ranks. It gives us an advantage when the enemy has no knowledge of our command structure. That is why you will address me as Nero during missions. No sir or any such titles."

"Yes sir." Hadrian checked his equipment one last time before they would leave, his hands finally resting on the gun on his right hip. "Sir, why exactly did I get a gun? I won't be able to use it properly, I have never been taught on how to use such weaponry, only swords and

magic." He took the gun in his hand, looking at it oddly, much to Nero's exasperation.

Nero took the gun from the boy's hands and held it in front of him so he could see it clearly. "Okay this is the safety lock, during combat that thing is off, all other times it is on unless you want to shoot off your toes." He pointed at the parts of the gun briefly before he continued. "This is the barrel, you point this end of the gun at whatever you want to kill and pull the trigger. If I ever see you pointing the gun at yourself or a comrade, loaded or not, I will punish you severely. Do I make myself clear?" Hadrian nodded quickly. "Good. Training complete, now you can use a gun." Nero grinned darkly at the boy before he walked out of the courtyard.

Hadrian put away his gun and followed Nero quietly as both men walked down a long paved road towards the heavily guarded apparation point, the only place in this district that could be used to enter and leave the city with magical means. The guards at this point were all Pretorians, they nodded respectfully at Nero, but regarded Hadrian only with curious looks, some even grinning knowingly.

"Hadrian, come here. I will side apparate you with me, unlike you I know exactly where we must land." He placed a hand firmly on the boys shoulder before they both left Arkadia, Nero just for another mission, but Hadrian for his first visit to the outside world since he was brought to the island at age three.

It was a very warm day in Marseille as the Potters and Blacks visited local magical quarter to see the differences to Diagon Alley. The entire place was much more open and modern then its British counterpart. The entire place was much closer to the muggle parts of the city, even the people dressed mostly in muggle clothing, so much unlike Diagon Alley which seemed to be stuck somewhere centuries back.

The Potters and Blacks were sitting outside a small cafe, enjoying a small brunch while they watched the people passing by on the street. It was just the first day of their vacation in France and they were set on enjoying every moment of their stay, though their children seemed less happy with the slow pace their parents had set.

As a waitress brought them their drinks there was a bit of commotion on the street, people standing aside, all talking seemingly stopped at once. Erica looked curiously to see what caused this, but for some moments she was unable to see anything on the street but the people standing on the sides. Moments later she saw what caused the commotion, two men, both wearing black clothing and carrying weapons with them walked down the street towards the local magical bank. Both men chatted silently, completely undisturbed by what happened around them, though Erica could see the younger mans eyes wandering from time to time. For one brief moment she caught his eyes and she saw the greenest eyes she had ever seen except for her own and her mothers. But the eyes of the young man seemed different, there was something to them that Erica could not describe, but it certainly caught her interest.

"Who are those two?" Sirius asked the waitress casually.

The waitress had watched the men just like all other people around her and did not immediately register that someone had asked her a question, before she answered with a heavy french accent. "Those two are from a group called Praetorians. I don't know much except the name and that they visit the city from time to time. Apparently the government has some sort of truce with them, I have never seen any Aurors approaching them because of their weapons. There are a lot of rumors though..."

"Rumors? What kind of rumors?" James curiosity was spiked by this, seeing two men that are clearly not working for the magical or muggle government walking down the streets heavily armed and completely undisturbed surely was unusual.

"Well... I don't think I should talk about such things. They are just silly rumors..." The waitress looked a bit uncomfortable for a moment before she decided to quickly change the topic. "Can I bring you anything else?"

"No, but thank you..." Sirius said a bit peeved. The waitress quickly walked away, disappearing inside the cafe only moments later.

"Mom, can Aries and I go explore a little? I promise we won't go that far away. Sitting here is plain boring." Erica looked expectantly at her mother, but Lily was rather unconvinced of this idea.

"I don't know Erica. It could be dangerous..." Erica put on her most pleading look, something that had worked with her mother countless times before. "Oh fine, but don't stray too far and stay away from those men we saw earlier. I don't want you to cause trouble."

"Same goes for you, Aries. Don't cause trouble here, there is plenty of time for mischief once you two are back at Hogwarts." Sirius grinned at his oldest son before both teens strolled away from their parents to explore the magical quarter of Marseille. But even though they were told not to they quickly followed the two strange looking men to the local bank, those two were too much of a mystery to be left alone, at least in Erica's curious mind.

AN: So far for the first chapter, here some explanations for the first few annotations in the story.

(1) Arkadia Nova is a fictional island hidden somewhere between the Balearic Islands and Corsica, approximately the same size as Mallorca.

(2) Aedile was an office of the Roman Republic that was responsible for maintenance of public buildings and regulation of public festivals. The office was generally held by young men intending to reach a high political office.

(3) The Praetorians were more than just some fancy palace guard for the Emperors. They already existed during the Roman Republic and were more of an elitist military faction. From time to time they participated in battles far away from Rome as well. The Praetorians were also known for following their own agenda, regardless of the Emperors orders sometimes. Oh well this is a rather incomplete summary and I am not sure if I explained the gist of what the Praetorians were correctly. Well who is really interested in them can always read them up on his own, I won't guarantee that I will portray them 100% accurately.

(4) The term patrician originally referred to a group of elite families in ancient Rome, including both their natural and adopted members. They were generally treated similar to the pure blood families in Magical Britain, but without the pure blood nonsense as they accepted an adopted person regardless of the former background.

(5) Yeah since Sirius is not a convict in this story I have replaced the escapee in the third year with Bella. Yeah I practically killed her off at the beginning of the story, I never really liked the crazy woman anyway.

(6) The Praetorian Prefect was the title of a high office in the Roman Empire. Originating as the commander of the Praetorian Guard, the office gradually acquired extensive legal and administrative functions, with its holders becoming the Emperor's chief aides.

That's it for today, Chapter 2 is already finished and will be posted tomorrow or the day after.

I know the absolute history geeks will find hundreds of points I might have portrayed inaccurately, but keep in mind that this is no longer the ancient Rome. And keep in mind that there will always be open questions at the beginning of a story, all questions will be answered as the story progressed. If I would try to press it all into the first chapter it would 12k words long and ruin the rest of the story, so don't expect all questions to be answered immediately.

Oh well leave a Review with your opinion, but if you just wish to spout senseless flames keep them to yourself. I am always open for constructive criticism, but flames only show the immaturity of the person who thinks he has to spout such nonsense.

Chapter 2: Recruit

Hadrian watched his surrounding curiously as he followed Nero through the streets of Marseille's magical quarter. Though Arkadia was by no means antiquated and was rather close to the muggle world in terms of development, the casual muggle clothing looked rather odd to the young man.

Nero just chuckled darkly as the people hurried out of their way, seemingly intimidated by the them. "Watch these people, Hadrian. We have come here for centuries and they still act as if we are some extremely rare and dangerous species. Gawk at but don't get to close, petty fools."

"I believe it is our state of armament that intimidates them. We wear our weapons open for everyone to see while they are only used to wands kept in their pockets as long as there are unneeded." Hadrian's statement only got a small grunt as response from Nero, the man seemed reluctant to contradict his young recruit.

"Just remember, don't cause unnecessary trouble. Those people are mostly harmless. But if one comes and begs for pain..."

"We oblige them and act in kind." Hadrian finished Nero's sentence, much to the mans amusement.

"Exactly. Be on your guard, Hadrian. I said most of them are peaceful but there are enough among them that are not." Hadrian just nodded at his superiors orders and resumed watching his surrounding as they slowly walked towards the bank.

He could easily see that quite a number of the people here were intimidated by their appearance. Just as Nero had said, they couldn't stop staring, but they wouldn't get too close either. As he looked around he saw one girl watching him intently from a nearby cafe. Seeing her eyes, eyes almost as green as his own, caused a feeling of familiarity, but Hadrian was quite sure he had never seen that girl before. Her shoulder length black hair hung loosely in her face, obscuring one part of it, almost as if she tried to hide something since she made no move to get the hair out of her face. Her clothing style and that of the people with her made it clear to him that she was used to this world, so it was quite unlikely that she had ever

been to Arkadia, no Arkadian would dress that way, even when visiting the muggle world.

In the end he banished his thoughts and feelings for the moment in favor of his mission. There was no room for failure if he ever wishes to join the Praetorians. Nero had made that painfully clear, he would not allow anyone to join if that person is unable to finish missions properly, the Praetorians were direct subordinates of the Emperor and had a reputation to uphold after all.

The local bank was only a minor branch of Gringotts, the main branch in France was situated in Paris, so the bank in Marseille was much smaller than its other counterparts. And unlike the major branches there were only human employees here, less money stored in the bank less interesting place for goblins to be. But they were not here to do business with the bank, they had simply chosen this place to meet with the group that was supposed to bring them the artifact. Once they were inside they quickly sent an bank employee to fetch some money from their local accounts.

They did not have to wait for long before their contacts arrived, two rather grim looking men in dark robes carrying a suitcase with them. They slowly approach Nero and Hadrian, scrutinizing the two Arkadians closely before they spoke.

"Are you Mr Verturia?" Nero just nodded, not wanting to say more then necessary to these men. "Do you have our money?"

"Where is the object your are supposed to bring? Don't make laugh and claim it is in your suitcase, I know that is bigger then this. No goods no money." Nero hissed angrily at the two men. He had feared they would try to stall the exchange to make a run for it with the money and the artifact, but he would rather tear them apart in public then letting them get away with cheating him.

"Our boss wants the money first, else he will sell the item to someone else. There are quite a number of other people interested in obtaining such a rare piece." The man grinned darkly at Nero, showing his white teeth.

Moments later the employee came back with requested money in muggle currency all prepared in a small suitcase. One of the men

quickly tried to grab the suitcase, but Nero stopped him by pointing his gun directly at the mans face.

"Not so fast buddy. As I said, not item no money." Hadrian watched the scene cautiously, even without any experience in such situations it was obvious that things would escalate soon. The bank employees had quickly hid behind anything that looked remotely like a decent cover to protect themselves.

Erica and Aries had slowly followed the two odd looking men into the bank, trying to get a look at what they were doing. In a small alcove they found the men together with two other strangers seemingly in a rather heated debate.

"Erica I don't think it is such a good idea to be here. Whatever they are talking about it does not look like they are friends or anything even remotely friendly to each other." Aries said with a wavering voice, feeling unsure of the idea to get even closer to these men.

"Don't be such a wimp. Come on I want to hear what they are talking about." She did not wait for her friend as she slowly sneaked closer to the alcove.

"Do you even understand a single word they speak? I mean the chances that they happen to speak English are rather slim if you ask me. Come on this is a waste of time." Aries pleading fell on deaf ears as Erica continued undisturbed.

"Maybe they talk French. I am not very good at it but at least I can understand the gist of most sentences." Erica stopped only a few feet away from the alcove. She did not even register the employees almost running away from the scene as she tried to understand what the men were talking about.

"What is this? Are you betraying us, Verturia? This way you will never get the artifact, our boss would rather destroy it then see it in the hands of Arkadian filth such as yourself." One of the man spat in French, anger dripping from every word.

"Erica this is not a good idea, this means trouble we should make a run for it." Aries whined, clearly disturbed by the scene of several men aiming weapons at each other.

"Shush Aries, they will know we are here because of you." Before she could even finish her sentence she was grabbed by one of the men and yanked forcefully into the alcove.

"What is this? More children to back you up Verturia? You are so pathetic." The man spat at Nero, both Nero and Hadrian looking baffled at the girl.

"I don't even know that kid." Nero looked condescendingly at the girl that had just made the situation even more complicated, Hadrian though recognized her as the girl he had seen earlier in the cafe. She did not look quite as scared as one would expect of a child in her situation, but Hadrian reasoned that she must be in shock or something like that.

In a rush of Gryffindorish courage and foolhardiness Aries jumped out of his cover yelling at the men. "Hey let her go you asshole. Harm her and you will pay the price..." Aries had his wand in his hands, aiming it at the man that held Erica.

The men laughed, even Nero couldn't help but smirk at the foolishness of the boy. Hadrian watched the scene worriedly, especially as one of the men raised his own wand against the boy. "Don't meddle with adult business, stupid kid. Crucio." He sent the sickly yellow curse at the boy, the curse would have hit Aries dead on, but luckily for the boy he was suddenly hurled away from the alcove. With a curt hand movement Hadrian sent a weak blasting curse at the boy, causing him to fly almost to the other side of the room.

"Aries!" Erica exclaimed in shock as she saw her friend being hit by a curse. She tried to wiggle herself out of her captors grip, but to no avail. The man only tightened his grip on her, making her yelp in pain.

"You will regret messing with us, Verturia. You will never get the artifact and your little dog here will pay the price for your insolence." Before anyone could act the men took out portkeys and vanished from the bank in an instant.

"Fuck them!" Nero yelled angrily. "That is why I always said that group is not trustworthy." He looked around angrily. "Fuck this bank. Without those blasted Goblins the security measures are so lousy I

am surprised that no one has robbed them of every single gold coin the store here. The Goblins would have skewered these fools before they even had a chance to escape for what they had just pulled."

Hadrian looked around cautiously, for one moment he saw the boy he had blasted to the other side of the room. The boy was unconscious, but he would be mostly unhurt. Much better then being placed under the torture curse.

"Hadrian, come on. We have to follow them. Our mission has now become a search and kill mission additionally to the original orders."

"Don't you mean search and rescue? They have a hostage after all."

"Whatever. We will meet up with our backup for this mission and take down those fools." Nero seemed rather unfazed by the whole hostage business.

"Nero, how exactly do you plan on following them? Do we have any leads on their whereabouts?"

"Foolish boy, while you were busy blasting that idiot across the room I hit one of them with a discreet tracking charm. This isn't the first time someone tries to cheat us." Nero angrily left the bank closely followed by Hadrian.

Erica found herself in the hands of a rather strange group. There were only few wizards among them, most seemed to be simple muggles that knew of the magical world. They had locked her up in a small cupboard, apparently they were not sure about what they would do with her at that moment.

Erica could only curse her luck that day and her own curiosity. This has gotten her into so much trouble just because she wanted to learn more about those Praetorians. Now she understood why people in Marseille kept their distance from those men. Her thoughts wandered to Aries, she hoped her friend was alright. She had seen one of the Praetorians blast him across the room to save him from an Unforgivable. Surely he would be alright and had already informed their parents about what had happened.

Oh she was in so much trouble as soon as her parents got to her. Of course they would save her, but after that she would most likely not

leave her room until it was time to return to Hogwarts. Oh how she cursed her rotten luck.

Hadrian and Nero meanwhile had met up with their backup, another man and a woman in equal uniforms to their own. The woman introduced herself as Cassia, one of the few women that served in the military since they changed their rules a few years in the past due to low recruitment quotas. Though she was almost a decade older than Hadrian he couldn't quite shake the feeling that she could be rather childish whenever their commanding officer was out of sight. The man who came to aid them was called Pelagius, a man that had obviously seen his fair share of battles, judging by the many scars visible on his bald head.

"Okay, listen up. We know that they are hiding in that building up there on that hill. We go in, kill everything that moves and dares to shoot back and retrieve the artifact." He saw Hadrian look at him with an arched eyebrow, causing him to groan slightly. "And if you find that black haired girl they took as a hostage try to save her as long as it does not interfere with our own mission. On a second thought, Hadrian you go save that girl, we deal with the artifact." All nodded in understanding and started to check their gear one last time before they would attack. Nero watched them silently before he stepped closer to Cassia, his mouth close to her ear as he whispered. "Keep an eye on the puppy, Seneca will chew my head off if his favorite pupil gets killed here after his recommendation." Cassia giggled when she heard the fake distress in her commanding officers voice, but would comply with the order none the less.

They had waited for the setting of the sun to attack in the encroaching darkness of the night before they made their first move. Their target was an seemingly abandoned factory, the building looking worse for wear, many windows were long destroyed. Whatever their enemies wanted here it could be nothing more than a temporary refuge for them.

When they came closer they were greeted by gunfire, the muggle guards had apparently been waiting for them to show up. "Great so much for hiding in the dark, we could have attacked hours ago and it wouldn't have made a damn difference." Nero growled loudly. Pelagius laughed loudly before he sent a barrage of blasting and cutting curses at the places the guards had taken cover, a series of screams telling him that he at least hit something. "Don't wreck the

place before we have the artifact, Pelagius. There are enough other ways to make them suffer for this hassle."

As they finally entered the building they found themselves in a large hall. On a nearby balcony they could see three figures, the two men they faced earlier that day and a third, possibly their leader, all looking smugly down at the four Praetorians.

"Now look at that, four stray dogs that have somehow found their way inside our property." The unknown third man spoke with a sneer. His comrades laughed haughtily, looking condescendingly at Nero and his group. "Have you finally come to hand over my money? Its about time after all the trouble you have caused me and my associates."

"Pah we have come to end your miserable existence. Eat this you bastard." Pelagius yelled angrily before he send another overpowered spell at the trio on the balcony, but to his frustration the spell was blocked by a powerful shield.

"A pity, Rufus, Nestor, kill them." With a wave of his hand the other two men jumped down from the balcony, their landing slowed by a silent spell. As if on cue suddenly a large number of armed guards appeared around them in the hall, surrounding the four Praetorians."

"Hadrian, this isn't your playground, find that girl, we clean up here." Nero's commanding voice left no doubt that this order was not negotiable. Hadrian just nodded curtly before he made a run for it, blasting several guards out of his way as he disappeared deeper into the building, enemies hot on his heels. "Now that the puppy is out of the way, we can play like adults." Nero smirked darkly. "Cassia, the muggles are all yours, we take the idiots."

Hadrian struggled a bit as he first tried to outrun his pursuers in the corridors of the old building, but in the end he realized that those muggles were too stubborn to give up. He stopped around a corner, waiting for the guards to catch up to him, their footsteps echoing in the empty corridors.

They shot around the corner, their guns in hands as they stopped dead at the sight of the young boy they presumed to be a Praetorian. They leveled their guns at his head, their fingers itching to the triggers. "Give it up boy, throw away your weapons and we might let

you live." One among the guards yelled in French with a heavy Russian accent.

Hadrian chuckled slightly. "No chance in hell." As the guards opened fire Hadrian let himself drop to the ground, with a flick of his hand he blew up the walls around the men, the jewel on his family ring glowing bright red as he focused his magic with its help.

"Hah, the kid can't even aim right." The men laughed mockingly, but their laughter died momentarily when they saw the dark grin on Hadrian's face. "Hands up where we can see them kid." Again they leveled their weapons at Hadrian's head, though they seemed more relaxed as he really held his hands above his head.

"Up you say? I believe there are more things coming down today." Before the men could make any sense out of his words Hadrian sent another spell at the ceiling, collapsing it onto the surprised guards. The entire ceiling easily came down with the walls that stabilized it gone and large chunks of stone crashed onto the men. A thick cloud of dust blocking the view of the few men that had managed to escape the debris. The moment they could see again Hadrian was long gone from that corridor.

In the hall the fight was raging on undisturbed. When they heard the sounds of the collapsing walls Nero chuckled. "Sounds like the puppy is having fun. You really sure you want to die here idiot?" His mock question just angered his opponent more, the man wiping his wand around in slashing motions, sending dark curses left and right, but so far his aim was so poor he only missed Nero who evaded the attacks skillfully.

Pelagius had even more fun with his adversary, he hunted the man, Nestor, around the hall with his short sword in his one hand while he shot curses after the man. Nestor responded in kind, casting one curse after another as he kept on running from Pelagius to avoid being cut to ribbons.

Nero had just blocked another curse with a shield when Cassia appeared at his side, smirking idly. "I see you are done with the warmup. Go look out for the puppy, he might need help there is still another wizard left unattended in this building."

"As you wish, commander." With a mock salute she darted away, leaving her comrades to their fun.

Hadrian had reached the first floor by now. No one was following him after his little house wrecking, it was effective but he knew he would get into trouble with Nero later, after all they were told not to destroy the building until they had found the artifact. But oh well there was no use crying over spilled milk.

He could hear the faint sounds of fighting from the other side of the building as he concentrated on hearing everything around him in the hope that the girl might be yelling or anything else to gain attention to her prison. But no luck with that. But he heard something or better said someone else talking nearby.

He sneaked down the corridor towards the voice until he could hear it quite clear. It was the third man and apparently he was talking with someone though a mirror in his hand. And whoever the person on the other side was the enemy wizard seemed positively scared of him and cowered all the time.

"Yes... yes we still have the relic... No the Praetorians are not dead yet but it is only a matter of time now. Rufus and Nestor will defeat them without a doubt then we interrogate them as planned... I am positive that we will be able to discern more details about the ritual once we have disposed of the pests... yes my lord I will not fail you like the others did..."

Hadrian had heard enough, with his gun in his hand he entered the room, the man had still not noticed him and had his back to him. Feeling like he has the upper hand Hadrian decided to announce his presence to the man. Pointing his gun at the enemy he fired it, hitting the mirror, ending the man's conversation much to his shock.

The man whipped around his wand already in his hand as he saw Hadrian standing in the doorway. A cruel smirk spread on his lips as he saw the youngest member of the Arkadian group. "Now now what do we have here. A foolish fledgling trying to mess with the grown ups."

"I don't care who you think you are I am here for only one reason. Where is the girl?" Hadrian tried to look as menacing as possible his gun still trained on the man's head.

The man chuckled again as he walked towards a nearby cupboard, opening the door and yanking out the girl on her black hair. "This foolish bitch? Idiot child that does not know when she butts into business of others."

"Hand her over now and no one gets hurt."

The man laughed loudly. "I don't think so." He pushed her back into the cupboard, slamming the door shut. "You want her, come fight for her, fledgling."

"You asked for it." Hadrian fired his gun repeatedly, but to his shock the man was far faster than he let on with his slow and sluggish movements before. Hadrian found himself on the defensive quite quickly. His shields shattered faster than he could put them up under the powerful spells of his opponent, the man seemingly enjoying his obviously outclassed adversary.

"What is up boy? Didn't you claim only moments ago that you wish to save that girl? A pity when conviction dissipates this quickly. The youth these days isn't worth the time it would take to train them properly." He mocked Hadrian assured of his own success.

In a moment of carelessness Hadrian managed to tackle the man to the ground, but he was easily overpowered by the stronger man and found himself pinned to the ground, his gun tossed aside in the quarrel.

"Pah and now you try to quarrel like those worthless muggles we have hired as cannon fodder. Do you have no pride, fledgling?"

Hadrian looked up at the man with defiance burning in his eyes. He managed to free one of his hands, placing it on his adversary's shoulder as if he tried to push him off him.

"Give it up, fledgling. You cannot defeat me, I am too strong for you." The man mocked the boy on the ground.

Hadrian just smirked coldly at the man before he answered him. "Strength isn't everything." Before the man understood what Hadrian meant the boy channeled his magic through his free hand that was still pressed against his opponent's shoulder. As Hadrian yelled out a

cutting curse the man screamed in agony as Hadrian's spell sent his arm flying, to his dismay this also happened to be his wand arm, so he was not just badly hurt but also mostly defenseless, slowly bleeding out.

It was that exact scene that Cassia saw when she had finally found her stray teammate. Hadrian was still lying on the ground, covered in the blood of his opponent. Said man was rolling around in pain, clutching the wound where his arm was once connected to his shoulder.

"I'll be damned, puppy. You actually defeated one on your own." She helped him up, casting a quick spell to clean him of blood on his uniform. "Nero will so not believe this."

"Look over there, Cassia." He pointed into one corner of the room, when Cassia turned she saw something that brought a gleeful glint to her eyes. "So you defeated that man and found the artifact, good work puppy. Now if you manage to find the girl the mission will be complete in no time."

He smirked at Cassia as he walked over to the cupboard, opening the door to reveal a black haired girl inside, looking rather defiantly at them. Cassia laughed loudly, mock applauding the young recruit.

"Keep that up and you will rise through the ranks faster than Nero did himself." Her words were lost to Hadrian, all his attention now on the girl.

"You can come out now, everything is alright, you are safe." He offered her his hand to help her up, but she stubbornly refused it, scrambling to her feet on her own. "What is your name, miss?"

"Erica..." She hesitated for a moment, she had no idea whose side those people were on, but they had most likely already seen her scar anyways. "Erica Potter."

Cassia whistled in astonishment. "Wow, puppy. You just saved the girl-who-lived. The Brits will so suck up to you now that you rescued their savior."

"My name is Hadrian, the babbling fool over there is Cassia."

"Hey, puppy I heard that. Remember you are still just a recruit." She muttered on about children and disrespect but was utterly ignored by the two youngsters.

"You got yourself in quite a lot of trouble when you tried to spy on us. Remember one thing for your future, being near a Praetorian always means trouble." He smirked at her. "Believe me I have only been around them for about 24 hours and I have seen trouble non stop."

Moments later Nero and Pelagius joined them in the room, both looking completely unharmed and refreshed as if they had not fought a battle only moments ago. Nero's eyes instantly fell on the writhing man on the ground, then the artifact on the far side of the room.

"Good work, Cassia. Mission accomplished, the Emperor will be pleased."

"Actually that wasn't me, it was all the puppy's doing." She pointed over to Hadrian who was still conversing with the girl.

"Well I'll be damned." He looked down at the fallen enemy, defiance still shining in the mans eyes though his face was distorted in pain. Nero frowned when he saw the man was still alive. "Hadrian, finish what you started."

For a moment Hadrian looked at Nero, not really understand what the man wanted from him. But then he saw Nero pointing at the man on the ground and Hadrian knew what was expected of him. He picked up his gun from the ground and walked over to the fallen enemy, every step hesitant since Hadrian dreaded what he would have to do now. He stood there his gun pointed at his adversary's face, but he could not pull the trigger, not against a now helpless man.

"What is this Hadrian? How can you expect to ever become a Praetorian if you cannot kill? Shoot him, that is an order. Do it and you will be one of us, do it and you will learn how to become great." Hadrian still hesitated, looking around unsure of what to do. He saw Pelagius looking at him condescendingly, Cassia's impassive face and the obvious shock on Erica's face as she realized what was about to happen. "Shoot him, Hadrian." Moments later a shot ripped

through the silence in the room and a pleased smile spread on Nero's face. "Welcome to the Praetorians, recruit Hadrian."

A\N: Oh well I end this chapter here, seems like a good point to stop.

I don't think there are any words or other things that need special explanations like in the first chapter.

Don't know yet when I will finish chapter three, the updates will be erratic, but I will try to keep the time shorter then a month if I have the time.

Also for the readers of my other story Crimson Vanguard I want to mention here that the hiatus is over, I have already started working on the next chapter, but I don't know yet when I will add it to the story.

And as always please leave a Review

Chapter 3: Lessons

Hadrian's thoughts had begun to spin as he slowly led Erica Potter out of the building she had been kept prisoner in. Only moments before he had killed a man, he had ended a life, for the first time no less. He knew it was necessary, the man was an enemy and he might have knowledge that was too dangerous to be passed on. But still he couldn't shake that feeling of guilt.

Cassia saw the somber look on her young comrade and couldn't help but remember her first kill some years ago. She could understand how he felt at the moment, but she also knew that she had to act or else his thoughts about his guilt would go too far. "Brighten up, puppy. You did well today. Not many would have done this well on their first mission."

"You are actually proud of what you did? You killed someone. That man was already beaten..." Erica ranted, causing Cassia's eyebrows to twitch in annoyance.

"Well listen, Missy. We are soldiers. We fight our enemies and destroy them. That man would have killed you without second thought no matter if you were helpless or not. Hadrian saved your sorry ass today."

Hadrian remained silent as they walked on while his two companions bickered on. Nero and Pelagius must have foreseen this. That's why they sent him with Cassia to bring Erica home while they delivered the artifact.

"Who in their right mind needs a wizard army these days? Aurors are more than enough to keep up order. You are just a bunch of violence obsessed maniacs if you ask me." Erica glared at Cassia, but the Praetorian wouldn't budge.

"We are not like your little society hidden in the shadows of the normal world. We are an independent nation. All our citizens are magical and under the protection of our Emperor. The military protects our independence and secures peace. Britain does not need this, you have the muggle armies to protect your nation." Hadrian spoke with an even voice, unwilling to listen to the bickering any longer. "In the past our armies conquered this world, now only Arkadia remains and we protect it ever vigilant. Our duty never

ends." Cassia smiled at Hadrian's words. It was the textbook answer all children learned in their first year of schooling.

"A whole nation of wizards and witches? Won't the muggles find out about something like this?" Erica's anger at Cassia was quickly disregarded in favor of her usual curiosity, much to Hadrian's amusement.

"The muggles will never find us, we are well hidden. For thousands of years they crossed the sea and traveled the Mediterranean Sea and not even once have they come close. Even with their new technology our island cannot be found. Our home is protected by ancient magic you wouldn't understand."

"What is it like to live in a purely magical country? I mean wizarding Britain feels like a nation by itself as secluded as it is, but a whole country... it must be amazing."

"It is, but you cannot even imagine life on Arkadia, our culture is different from everything you have ever experienced." Hadrian smiled at her, already anticipating her next question. Well he could guess what the next question would be.

"Will I ever get a chance to see Arkadia? I would really like to see how different it is from my home." She looked expectantly at Hadrian, but got no immediate answer from him.

Hadrian looked at Cassia, not really knowing how to answer that question. Cassia though had an impassive expression on her face as she gently shook her head. "No, the chances that you can see Arkadia are next to nothing. We are not biased against wizards and witches from other parts of the world, but you are a special case. You are the girl-who-lived, people watch you far too closely and they would most likely place countless tracking charms on you once they find out where you intend to go. The risk is just not worth it. You would bring people like Dumbledore to Arkadia and that is unacceptable." Cassia's told the young Potter girl solemnly.

"What does all of this have to do with the headmaster?" Erica asked confused.

"Everything, Missy. That man is a problem wherever he sticks his crooked nose into. But we don't have time for this discussion now.

We need to return you to your family before they start a nationwide search for you." Placing a hand on the girl's shoulder Cassia apparated them both to Marseille's magical quarter, the last place Erica's family had been before she had been kidnapped. Hadrian followed them closely, unwilling to leave them both alone with each other.

Meanwhile Nero and Pelagius had already returned to Arkadia with the artifact and were now sitting with their superior, Praetorian Prefect Sextus Aelianus for their debriefing. Pelagius was mostly silent as Nero recounted the last day very detailed, often disrupted by questions from their superior. It was well known that the old man would never again leave Arkadia and therefore wanted to know every detail as if he tried to relive the missions like he was there himself.

"The betrayal of this group was expected. A pity we couldn't find out who was their last real employer, but alas their ending was befitting their actions." Aelianus spoke evenly as he looked out of the window of his office.

"Yes, if it hadn't been for the unforeseeable interruptions I would have called it a perfect mission." The old man nodded at Nero's words.

"Ah yes the girl. Hadrian and Cassia are taking her back to her family I presume." Nero nodded quickly. "It is unfortunate when civilians get involved with our operations. You know how the Emperor thinks about harming innocents. Good that you got her out unhurt, the Emperor will be pleased to hear that."

"There is more to this girl. We found out that the girl is the one the Brits call the girl-who-lived, Erica Potter."

"Potter? Are you sure, Nero?"

"Yes, sir. The girl had the scar to back up her claim. She also seemed quite defiant towards us. She is either used to life threatening situations or she is plain ignorant of her own safety." Nero chuckled a bit, though he was the only one and quickly stopped when he saw the grave expression on his superiors face.

"This is not good. Also the fact that you sent Hadrian to bring her back to the Potters might become a problem for us." Both Nero and Pelagius looked confused at Aelianus. "I presume you know that Hadrian is adopted." Nero nodded. "Hadrian was formerly Harry James Potter, Erica Potter's older brother. They gave their child up to focus on their little prodigy, a grave mistake if you look at how things are now. Hadrian shows much promise to become strong and influential. If they see what has become of their unwanted child they might reconsider and try to take him back to Britain. That must not happen at all cost. Consul (1) Nerva is very fond of his adopted son and will not let go of his youngest child that easily. The Consul holds much influence and is a confidant of our Emperor, I believe I don't need to go on." Both Nero and Pelagius nodded.

"When we saw them together there were no signs of them being related in any way. Only their eye color, but even that was slightly different. I don't think they will find out."

"Let us hope it will stay that way. According to your report the boy shows great promise and I will not give up such talent to possible enemies of Arkadia. The Emperor believes in peace, but we all know how corrupted the rest of magical Europe is. No risks, our duty to protect Arkadia never ends, no matter how peaceful they times may seem."

Almost twelve hours had passed since Erica Potter had disappeared from the bank in Marseille's magical quarter. Twelve hours since her family and their friends had found Aries Black being treated by a healer after a supposed fight in the bank. Only reluctantly Aries shared the entire story about what had happened, knowing full well that his parents would most likely punish him for acting against their orders and following the Praetorians. But at that moment everyone was busy searching for the missing girl-who-lived.

After six hours of search without any clue James Potter swallowed his pride and informed Albus Dumbledore, asking for his help to find his daughter. The old wizard claimed he had already anticipated something like that would happen as they decided to go on this vacation against his express wish. He had quickly assembled members of his vigilante group and joined the Potters in France to search for Erica.

But even with the additional manpower they had no success in finding the missing girl. Dumbledore had quickly discarded the idea to ask the French Aurors for help, stating it would be very dangerous for Erica if it were to be known that Erica had disappeared and was currently unguarded. So the search continued until they reconvened at the place where Erica had disappeared. The place where Hadrian and Cassia had just arrived with their charge.

"I have a really bad feeling about this, Cassia." Hadrian watched the now empty street with a foreboding feeling. It was late at night and the street lighting in the magical quarter was far less than ideal.

"Relax, puppy. We are here to finish our job, then we go home and have a really long nap." Cassia looked rather carefree now that she was out of her superiors sight. She too looked around, but unlike Hadrian she was not on the edge with one hand close to the weapon.

Suddenly Hadrian jumped to the side as a garish red light impacted with the ground where he had stood moments before. Both Praetorians had their weapons out moments later, searching for the attacker who was still hiding in the shadows.

"Puppy, eyes." She yelled at Hadrian, he did not immediately understand until he saw a bright ball of light forming in her hand. He quickly shielded his eyes with one arm as Cassia sent the ball of light flying. Seconds later the ball exploded in a blinding white light, illuminating the entire street. Erica did not realize what the woman had planned and fell on her back as she was thoroughly blinded by the light. When he opened his eyes again he could see everything on the street clear as during daytime. And they quickly saw the unknown attacker walking closer to them, an older man with many scars and an artificial eye, hobbling towards them on a wooden leg.

Cassia wasted no time, sending more spells at the man, but to her astonishment they bounced off a rather impressive shield. All shots from her gun were skillfully evaded as well. "Puppy, flanks." Her order was unmistakable and Hadrian quickly tried to flank the man to allow them to attack him from two sides at once. They both sent more spells at him, but this time he sidestepped them with agility unseen from a man as handicapped as him.

The man went for Hadrian first, judging him to be the weaker opponent he sent a wide variety of spells at the boy, some cutting

curses, stunners, blasting curses, fire spells and more mixed together in an unpredictable pattern. Hadrian at first could only evade the attacks, they were far too many in a short time frame to erect a shield. It would simply block the first few before the rest of the barrage would blast through the shield and take him down.

Cassia reacted in kind and unleashed hell against the man to help her young comrade and this time she could actually drive the man back, her relentless assault forcing him to abandon his onslaught against Hadrian. The man switched targets and concentrated on Cassia only to get hit with small cutter against his left shoulder. But the wound deterred him little and he sent his barrage of spells against Cassia. Unlike Hadrian she opted for a shield, confident that it would be strong enough, but her shield quickly shattered and she was hit dead on by a series of blasting and cutting curses, sending her down to the ground.

Seeing Cassia on the ground caused Hadrian to snap, he charged towards the man, ducking two spells as he neared him. With a flick of his hand he sent a cutter against the man's leg, hitting the wooden leg blasting it off, causing the man to stumble before he finally was tackled to the ground by Hadrian with a gun pressed against his head. But at the same time he had his wand at the boy's throat, causing a tentative stalemate. Both tried to stare the other down, but neither gave any quarter even though Hadrian was rather unnerved out by the man's artificial eye.

It was that moment that more people arrived at the scene. "Alastor, that is enough." An old man ordered with a booming voice, but apparently he had enough authority to cause the grizzled attacker to cease his hostilities and take the wand of Hadrian's throat.

By now Cassia had managed to get back up and reluctantly ordered Hadrian to stand down as well. She couldn't help but be amazed that Hadrian had gotten that far against such a powerful opponent, but it was more luck than anything. "Who are you people, why do you attack us in the middle of the night?" Cassia almost yelled at the man. She was thoroughly pissed, hurting all over her body and most of all tired. The day was far too long already.

The old man who had arrived on the scene smiled a grandfatherly smile at Cassia and Hadrian as he answered. "I am Albus Dumbledore, headmaster of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and

Wizardry. The man you fought is an old friend of mine, Alastor Moody and those people behind me are other associates of mine." Moody gave Dumbledore a disapproving look for offering information so readily to unknown people that might be enemies. "I am sure this whole situation must be simple misunderstanding, surely there is no need for violence."

"Tell that your rabid attack dog over there." Cassia couldn't help but snap at the man before she calmed down. "My name is Cassia Sabinus and this is my partner Hadrianus Aurelius Nerva. We are Praetorians in the service of his majesty the Arkadian Emperor." After her short introduction Albus was hard pressed not to stare wide eyed at Hadrian, but he could suppress the surprised look in the last moment. "We have been sent here to bring back that girl over there after she was drawn into Praetorian business because of her unhealthy curiosity." She pointed at Erica who was still sitting on the ground, her sight slowly turning back to normal after being blinded."

"Erica!" A woman cried and came running from behind Dumbledore, completely ignoring the two Praetorians she passed on her way to her daughter. "Oh my dear, are you alright? Have they done anything to you?"

"No mom, my eyes hurt a bit from that sudden flash, but else I am alright. Those two sort of... rescued me..." At this Lily Potter looked up at the two strangers, but this time with a grateful look. She was a bit startled when she saw the boy's green eyes for a moment. But before she could thank them Dumbledore spoke up.

"Wonderful, we cannot express how grateful we are for your help. But may I ask who the people were that abducted her?"

"That information is confidential. Don't you worry your old head about this. They didn't even know who she is before we took them out." Cassia and Hadrian suddenly glared hateful at the old wizard, Cassia shouting at him in anger. "And cease your attempts to read our minds, such actions will cost you your head, Mr Dumbledore. You cannot escape the wrath of Arkadia for long once you caused it."

The old headmaster made a soothing gesture in an attempt to placate the Praetorians, he really had no need for trouble with Arkadia, if they remain on their island far away from Britain it would

serve him much better. "I really had no intention to antagonize you, I was merely curious. Forgive this old man for a lapse in his judgment."

"Whatever, we did what we came for." Hadrian spoke before he turned around towards Erica and her mother. "Be careful from now on, Erica. We won't always be around to help you when your curiosity causes you trouble." He smiled slightly at the girl, Erica smiled back but her mother still stared at Hadrian with her eyes wide open. Lily Potter wanted to say something, but she found herself unable. The boy looked so familiar, even now with the growing shadows as Cassia's spell faded he still held some resemblance to James Potter. It was subtle but still there. For a moment she believed it could be her lost son, but before she could say anything he turned away with his partner and quickly vanished at the apparition point.

As Hadrian and Cassia arrived back at the apparition point in the imperial district. The guards looked astonished at the state Cassia was in, cuts all over her face and arms, some still bleeding slightly. And at the same time the rookie stood next to her mostly unhurt, helping her along the path towards the Garrison.

The moment they had entered the Garrison they were already ordered to go to Nero's office for their debriefing. Cassia groaned she would have rather taken care of her wounds, she hated to walk around like this, hurting and smelling after a taxing day filled with fighting. But she had to follow her superiors orders and wait until she was officially off duty to do what she wants.

Nero was alone in his office as they had arrived, Pelagius long gone after they had dropped off the artifact. When Nero saw the state Cassia was in he couldn't help but chuckle a bit at her expense. "Wow Cassia, you look like shit."

"Thanks boss, I also feel that way. Can we cut this short? I really need a shower and someone to have a look at those cuts." Cassia whined a bit, showing less respect towards her superior as Hadrian would have expected in the strict confines of the Praetorian Garrison.

"Well then, I sent you to drop off a child, not fight. What the hell happened?"

"The moment we arrived we were attacked by an unknown man. We immediately returned fire, but the man was an incredibly tough opponent. Eventually I was hit before Hadrian could tackle the man to the ground with a gun at his head." Nero looked curious at Hadrian, again the boy had managed to end a fight despite his lack of training. He would be strong as soon as they had him trained properly. "The man was later identified as Alastor Moody, he was there on orders from Albus Dumbledore to search for young Miss Potter."

"Dumbledore you say?" Nero looked slightly disturbed after hearing the name, he still remembered the words of Aelianus concerning Dumbledore and Hadrian. "Was the old man present as well?"

"Yes sir. He showed up the very moment Hadrian had taken down Moody. He tried to pry for information about what happened today, even going as far as trying to probe our minds."

"He did what?" Nero raised his voice in anger. "Has he succeeded with this?"

"No sir. We felt the intrusion the moment he attempted it and warned him off. Apparently he had hoped we would not feel it, but he ceased his attempt after a stern warning." Hadrian spoke up, trying to stop his new superior from getting angry.

"Fine. I give out a warning to everyone who leaves Arkadia to be weary of the man. A person that tries to read other people's mind without any qualms is very dangerous to the safety of our home." Nero sighed before he continued. "But else good work. Cassia you are dismissed. Get cleaned up and have someone take care of those cuts before they become troublesome." With a quick salute Cassia left, happy to finally get the shower she so desperately needed in her own opinion.

"Hadrian you did well on this mission. You surpassed my expectations by far to be precise. I've had so many dunderheads coming here in the hope to become Praetorians, but I have high standards and won't let anyone in just because some influential person wants his son or nephew to get a prestigious job." He chuckled darkly. "At this moment there are only one hundred and seventeen Praetorians, we are the elite in the Emperor's ranks. Any plebeian (2) fool can be a soldier, hell we have almost five thousand

regular soldiers. Don't get me wrong we need them, they protect our home, but we Praetorians we protect far more and do those jobs normal people are unable to do, that also includes protecting the Emperor and his family."

"So this means I have passed and am a Praetorian now?" Hadrian asked hopeful, his expression causing Nero to laugh again.

"Yes, yes you are one of us now. We will have to work out a new schedule for you." At this Hadrian let out a happy yell, forgetting that he was in the presence of his superior. "But you are still a student at the Schola Magica, Magister Seneca would have my head if I were to take you out of school. You will drop certain subjects and come here for training in the free time. You will also go on missions, for that time you will be on absent leave from school."

"Yes I can't wait. How soon will I be sent out on missions?" Hadrian couldn't help but show his eagerness to do more work for the Praetorians. The last day was strenuous and horribly dangerous, but it was also exciting for a boy his age.

"I don't know, that depends on the missions we get from the Emperor and on your progress during your training. Your lessons will not be easy, I will not except loitering. You will take your training and your studies serious or else I will have to motivate you and believe me you don't want that." Nero emphasized the last few words, looking menacingly at his new recruit. Hadrian gulped before he nodded. "Good. Judging by your success today I doubt you will have to do guard duty any time soon, they reserve that for the senior members to protect the Emperor and the less skilled to protect the imperial district. You will most likely get to see much more of the continent than most of your classmates at school."

"I am looking forward to it. I will do my best, maybe one day I am also worthy enough to serve the Emperor as a personal guard, it would be such an great honor to meet his majesty."

"Believe me you don't want to be on guard duty. Those who have to do it hate it since it is extremely boring. Arkadia is almost too safe. Do your job right and you might get a chance to meet the Emperor because of your achievements rather than your duties." Nero looked contemplative for some moments as if he considered saying something else, but in the end he dismissed Hadrian for the night.

But before Hadrian was out of the office he spoke up once more. "Oh and Hadrian, if I have a say in it your lessons will happen out in the field, you youngsters learn nothing in a training room. Come back tomorrow and wear your normal uniform from now on." With these parting words Hadrian finally left to retire for the night, exhausted but happy about what he had achieved this day.

AN: Well so much for this chapter. I know I might have depicted Moody a bit too powerful, but the man is described as one of the best Aurors of the first war. A man of his reputation must be powerful in my opinion. Also about Harry and the Potters, I have no plans to keep his real identity hidden forever. The struggle between the two persons, Harry Potter the brother of the girl-who-lived and Hadrian Nerva the imperial Praetorian will be much more interesting than some secret identity.

(1) Consul was the highest elected office of the Roman Republic and an appointive office under the Empire.

(2) The plebs were the general body of free landowning Roman citizens (as distinguished from slaves) in Ancient Rome. They were distinct from the higher order of the patricians. A member of the plebs was known as a plebeian. This term is used today to refer to one who is or appears to be of the middle or lower order; however, in Rome plebeians could become quite wealthy and influential.

Both explanations are from Wikipedia, just as a note for those who want to read more about both Consuls and Plebeian.

That is it for today, please leave a Review.

Chapter 4: Aria

For two weeks Hadrian had already been training with the Praetorians, waiting for a new mission to arrive. But so far he had no luck with that. He spent half of his days in school, listening to the magisters lectures and the other half at the Praetorian Garrison, mostly getting his ass kicked around by senior members in sparring matches.

"Focus Hadrian. Do not let your opponent out of your sight." Cassia admonished her young comrade. Even though she was nearly ten years older than Hadrian she still was the next to him age wise so she spent the most time training with the youngest Praetorian. Most others only looked a bit condescendingly at the young boy, calling him too green to keep up with them during a fight so he mostly dueled with Cassia and occasionally Nero, whenever the man had time and enough pent up frustration to do so.

"Seeing your actions is not the problem, reacting in time is the problem." Hadrian groaned a bit before he resumed a fighting stance. He charged at Cassia with his fists up, trying a more physical approach instead of relying on magical attacks from a distance. But Cassia merely smirked before she side stepped his attack and caused him to fall by blasting him off his feet by crashing a conjured squall against his feet. Cassia laughed loudly when he fell face first to the ground.

"Nice try, puppy. But with brute force you won't manage to beat me. You need to learn how to combine magical and physical attacks. You should also use your surrounding more to your advantage as well. Even in an empty room like this one you can still transfigure the ground, create a solid wall to block spells, create waves on the ground to mess with an enemies balance when he charges to attack. What I want to say is think before you attack, then you might be able to win a fight against me... in some years." Cassia smirked at the young boy on the ground. Hadrian had turned around and was now lying on his back, looking at the ceiling with a frustrated expression.

"Easy for you to say, you have done this for years already..." Hadrian groaned slightly as he turned his head to see Cassia. But instead of looking at him her gaze was on someone else. Suddenly a shadow appeared above him. As he looked up he saw a girl

looking down on him with an amused expression, her blue eyes shining with mirth.

"My my. Your commander said I would find my new partner for the mission here in the training room, but he did not say he would be at my feet from the very beginning." She grinned at him as Hadrian only looked at her disbelieving.

"Uhm hello." Was the first and only thing that came to his mind as he looked at her. Cassia had a laughing fit next to him before she pulled Hadrian back to his feet and left the room. After a moment he finally continued. "The name is Hadrian, what is yours?" He looked at her expectantly, but the unknown girl still simply smirked at him.

"Well after your oh so eloquent introduction I guess I can give you my name. The name is Aria." She nearly laughed out loud when she saw one of his eyebrows rise in confusion.

"Not the typical Arkadian name. Adopted by a patrician family?"

"Nope, it is just nickname my mother gave me. She is not from here... well was before she permanently moved here to be with my father."

Hadrian tipped his chin with one index finger in contemplation for a moment. "And what would be your real name, kind lady?"

"That is for me to know and for you to find out." She smirked at him again before she turned around, her long blond hair swinging a bit after the sudden motion. "Come on your commander won't wait for us all day."

A little dumbfounded Hadrian followed Aria out of the room towards Nero's office. This girl caused him more new questions, then she answered with her short replies. But at least she said something about a mission, that was reason enough for him to follow her... for the moment at least. Surely Nero would shed some more light on this mystery called Aria.

In Britain a worried James Potter paced his study at the Potters ancestral home. Ever since the day Erica had disappeared during their holiday his wife had acted strange. Even after Erica had returned in the presence of those strange Praetorian fellows she

remained mysteriously silent and guarded. After seeing the Praetorians she became even more worrisome than she was during Erica's absence. He knew she did not like it when people tried to pry into her personal matters, even if the person was her husband, but now James couldn't help but act. He had to know what troubled his wife so much.

He found Lily sitting in the library with an open book in her lap, but she was not reading it, instead she stared out of a nearby window. She watched Erica and her friend Aries playing Quidditch outside with a sad expression.

"Lily, will you finally tell me what troubles you so? It is plain obvious to everyone that there is something on your mind, please let me help you, whatever it is let me help you." James looked pleading at his wife as she turned her head towards him and looked at him with much sadness in her eyes.

"James... do you sometimes think about Harry... I mean do you believe he could still be out there somewhere?"

James sighed when she said the name of their missing son. About a year ago all search for him had been abandoned and he had been officially declared dead, but not all believed that. The entire situation had been emotionally taxing on all of them, but the one who suffered the most from it was Lily.

"Lily, we talked about this all with Professor Dumbledore. He said himself that there is no way to find him and that he is most likely..." He dared not to finish that sentence.

"Two weeks ago when Erica disappeared... do you remember those two who brought her back?"

"Yeah, those Praetorian fellows. Odd people, they fight muggle weapons and magic at the same time... Never thought that would be working in a real fight, but that boy somehow prevailed against Madeye."

"That boy... have you seen him James. His eyes... he got the same eyes that Erica and I have. The same green."

"Lily be reasonable. There might be many more people out there with green eyes like yours, that is nothing special." James realized what his wife was playing at, but to him this was a mere phantasm.

"But his face, his hair... he looked so much like you. Haven't you seen it? Even his age seems fitting. Don't you think those are a bit too many coincidences? I know what I have seen, James." Lily remained defiant, her mind seemed wrapped around the idea and she wouldn't stop until she met that boy again so she would know for sure who he really is.

"Lily..." James did not what to respond to this, he had to admit her had not really looked at the boy, his entire attention was fixed on his daughter at that moment. But Professor Dumbledore even talked to both Praetorians and did nothing, surely he would have seen those similarities as well... "I will talk with Professor Dumbledore about this as soon as I can. But that will take some time, he is currently away on some business for the event at Hogwarts this year. But I promise Lily I will see what I can do."

As Hadrian and Aria arrived at Nero's office the senior officer was already waiting for them together with Cassia. "Ah finally. I already feared you might have gotten lost on your way here, Cassia came hours earlier."

"Yeah sorry but your new recruit was in need of a nap after getting his ass kicked during his training." Aria smirked at Hadrian as he tried to glare a hole in her head, without much success much to his chagrin.

"Well don't let that happen again, Hadrian." Nero looked sternly at his subordinate before he spoke again. "Now for the reason I have called you here Hadrian. We got a new mission for you. You will go to Sicily, more precisely to Mount Etna. Recent excavations have uncovered a ruin of an unknown culture. We have already dealt with the local government, they will keep people away from there until we are done with that place. Your mission is to go there and explore the ruin." Hadrian looked dubious at Nero, many questions on his mind.

"Okay... and why exactly do we send a Praetorian to explore a ruin? I mean we are soldiers, not archeologists."

"Yes, you are just a soldier and you will do your soldier thing and look out for dangerous individuals at that ruin." Aria spoke a bit condescendingly with Hadrian, as if she was chiding a child. "Geez you surely don't recruit them because of their brains." Aria looked at Nero in mock displeasure, while the older Praetorian pinched the skin between his eyes in annoyance.

"Hadrian, you will guard... that woman." He pointed curtly at Aria without looking at her. "For the time being she will be your partner." Judging by his tone Nero disliked this arrangement as much as Hadrian did, if not even more.

"You send me out with a civilian?" Hadrian looked first at Nero then at Aria with a rather shocked expression.

"Yes Hadrian. You will babysit her while she studies the ruin. She is one of the archeology students of Magister Flavianus. Sadly all other real archeologists are currently away on other missions, so you will have to take the leftovers." Nero looked rather peeved at Aria while he said that. Cassia meanwhile was hard pressed not to laugh during the entire exchange.

"And what is she doing here?" Hadrian pointed at Cassia who now looked like the cat who ate the canary.

"Oh I will be coming along as your chaperone." She grinned at the indignant look she got from both Hadrian and Aria. "Can't let two teens your age go out unsupervised. So no funny business, Hadrian."

Before Hadrian could reply anything Nero spoke up again, clearly about to loose it moments later. "That is all, Cassia got all your orders since she will lead the mission... now get out of my office, ALL OF YOU."

All three quickly left the office to leave the angry man alone. Barely outside the room Aria couldn't help but ask. "Has that guy ever heard of anger management? Really, so uncivilized."

Cassia chuckled before she strolled off. "See you in two hours in the Atrium kids. Be ready to leave by then." Without giving them a chance to reply she had already disappeared around a corner, leaving Aria and Hadrian alone.

"So... what do Praetorians do before they go on a mission? Any last minute rituals?" Aria's questions came completely surprising for Hadrian, for a moment he looked at her strangely before he finally answered.

"I don't know what the others do, but I simply make sure my equipment is complete and in working order. Two hours are more than enough to find the quartermaster and replace missing or damaged things." As much as he disliked being used as a babysitter, Hadrian had to except his orders and protect Aria. Sadly this would also include being at least on cordial terms with her, else she would write a negative report. And Hadrian knew exactly who would read all reports on such missions with archeological background. He relented to try and treat her at least like he would treat his classmates.

"That is so boring." Aria yawned to underline her statement before she giggled at Hadrian's look. "Oh come on, you soldiers are far too stiff. I had hoped that you would be a little better since you only joined some weeks ago. Else I would have asked for a more seasoned guard."

"Asked? They gave you the choice whom you take with you on this mission?" Hadrian looked incredulously at Aria after he heard that statement.

"Well yeah. The Emperor is very interested in these explorations and the artifacts we find, so we archeologists get a lot of leeway." She looked her wristwatch for moment before she turned back towards Hadrian. While she looked at her watch Hadrian tried to get glimpse of her family ring, she must be a patrician so she must have a ring with her family crest like all other patricians. But to his disappointment she had used a spell to conceal the crest. "Oh well come on, I already got my stuff ready so show me what you soldiers carry around."

"What have I done to deserve this..." Hadrian muttered silently, but judging by her grin Aria had most likely heard that statement. With Aria in tow her walked off in the direction of the locker rooms.

Albus Dumbledore had just returned from France concluding the last discussions about this years event at Hogwarts with the

headmistress of Beauxbatons. He was content, everything was coming along nicely, yes the event would be remembered for a long time and it would bring Europe's three major schools together. He had just settled down in the chair behind his desk in his office at Hogwarts when the wards announced a visitor waiting in front of the statue that guards the entrance to his office. He sighed a bit annoyed at the unwanted interruption, but finally relented to let the visitor enter.

When he saw his unexpected visitor, Dumbledore couldn't help but wonder what brought the man here. "James, my boy. What can I do for you this fine evening? Is everything alright, are Lily and Erica safe?"

"Yes, professor. They are both safe, but... Lily is the reason I have come here. She has become reclusive and silent since that incident two weeks ago."

"Understandable. Every mother would be shaken when her child was kidnapped by unknown men." Dumbledore tried to sound reassuring, but he was more focused on figuring out why exactly James had come to him to talk about this. The human psyche was not really his field of expertise.

"Lily believes... she believes that on those Praetorians was Harry. I tried to argue with her but she is adamant. She won't stop believing this until she has met that boy once more to confirm who he really is." James looked around a bit uncomfortably, his lost son was still a sore subject even to him.

Albus could only sigh in exasperation. He had seen the boy and he couldn't deny that this boy was most likely Harry Potter. He had given the boy to the Arkadians with the intent to separate the boy permanently from his family. It was the best for the boy's safety as well for the progress of his own plans with Erica. He needed her to trust him first and foremost, trust him even more than she would trust her parents. Erica would be essential to their success should Voldemort return and there was no room for dissent within the Light side. He needed her to follow him without questioning and the boy would have acted like a protector and diverted her trust, her parents were already a troublesome factor. He did not like it to separate a family, but it was for the greater good.

But now everything was different. Of all the possible paths the boy could have taken he had to become a soldier, one of those Praetorians no less. They always appeared at the oddest places around the world and of course they had to run across the Potters. He needed to salvage the situation, maybe he could use the boy's sudden reappearance for his own plans. The boy must be powerful to become a Praetorian, surely he would benefit the Light side should he join his Order.

"Yes, James. I have to admit that I thought along the same lines when I saw him that night. But I did not act, it was simply too dangerous and bringing Erica to safety had the utmost priority. Also we could not say who might have listened in and used such information against your family." James looked gobsmacked at the old wizard, clearly not believing what he had just heard. "Hadrianus Aurelius Nerva... I will see if I can find out more about him, trust me James should he really be Harry then I will see to it that he returns to your family." James could only nod weakly, still shocked that it was not just his wife that believed that boy to be his son. "Now if there isn't anything else I would like you to leave, James. I have much to do now. I will inform you once I know more about the boy." James quickly reacted to this dismissal and left, not knowing how he should tell this to his wife.

Hadrian and his two companions slowly followed the small path at the feet of the Etna to their destination. Through a small cave in some tourists had found the entrance to a large network of tunnels that were identified as ruins not much later. Of course there were some imperial spies that reported this immediately what led to Hadrian's current mission.

"Do we really have to walk this much? Geez we can use magic for the gods sake, why not just apparate there?" Aria whined a bit as she followed the Praetorian who seemed completely unfazed by the fact that they had already been walking for more than an hour through this sometimes impassible terrain.

"Stop getting on my nerves, we should be there soon..." Hadrian groaned a bit. He really did not want to babysit a civilian, well less than a month ago he was one himself, but the soldier mentality of the Praetorians was pretty contagious once you are part of their group. 'Get over yourself and keep on doing your job', the first thing Hadrian had learned during his training with Cassia and Nero. "And

we don't apparate there because we don't know who might be there. No need to let the local authorities know that we are no simple archeologists. There is nothing in that area to provide us cover to get there unseen."

"Still, we shouldn't have to walk. Couldn't you get us a car or something like that?"

"I can't drive and judging by your age you can't either." Aria gave Hadrian an indignant look for his comment, but he ignored it. "And I don't even want to know whether Cassia can drive or not, it would be a nightmare either way."

"Hey, I heard that comment, puppy!" Cassia yelled from behind them, causing both teens to chuckle in amusement.

Luckily they reached their destination rather soon after that, so neither Aria could whine much more, nor could Cassia come up with a way to pay back Hadrian for his comment before she had to focus on their mission once more.

"That's it?" Aria asked incredulously. "A simple hole somewhere in the wilderness of Sicily?"

"What we seek is down there, I hope you aren't afraid of dark places." Hadrian smirked at her, but she only huffed a bit. "Well, ladies first?" He looked expectantly at Aria, but said girl made no move.

"Puppy, I believe it is best you jump down first... just in case some bad monsters lurk down there to eat our poor archeologist." Cassia was hard pressed not to laugh at the sour look she received from both of her companions, but she couldn't care less for that, all she wanted was to get this mission over with and if possible some entertainment along the way.

"Fine, I will gallantly risk my own life to ensure the safety of my lovely ladies here." He did not wait for a response, but simply jumped into the hole, disappearing moments later from Cassia's and Aria's sight. The moment he disappeared in the darkness Hadrian already regretted jumping down without sending a light sphere down first to see how far the hole would go down. After a few moments he

cast a levitating charm on himself to slow down his own fall, only mere moments before he reached the ground.

He quickly cast a light sphere to finally see where he actually was. The pale light from his sphere revealed a long corridor leading down further towards the mountain. Suddenly he heard Cassia yelling down from her place outside. "Puppy, fire in the hole." He had the sudden urge to get away from the place he had landed, to get away really fast. But he remained there, almost rooted to the place as he looked up towards the small glimpse of daylight he could see through the hole. Then he could see something falling down towards him, or better said someone, someone who was yelping in sudden shock. He could barely reach out and catch the person before she would have hit the ground rather hard.

"So keen on being held by me or have you just forgotten that you are able to use magic to slow down your fall?" Hadrian grinned at the still deathly pale Aria in his arms. She needed some moments to regain her wits before she started to glare at Hadrian.

"Your insane friend up there pushed me into the hole. Are all of your Praetorians mental?"

"Some, but not all of us." He grinned at her, partly because of his own response, but mostly because she yet had to complain about him holding her in his arms. "Now shall we proceed further down this corridor or do you want to stay here all day and discuss Cassia's state of mind?"

"Firstly you will let me down, Hadrian. Secondly you will make sure that this place is safe before I follow you anywhere and thirdly ..."

"By the gods there is a third?" Hadrian exclaimed in mock shock.

"Thirdly you will keep that psycho away from me for the rest of our mission. I will make sure to report this incident." Aria looked really peeved at Hadrian as he finally let her down.

"As you wish, milady." He bowed slightly after he had set her down, but the large grin on his face showed that he was far from being serious. "I will do my utmost to prevent Cassia from harming you, but I cannot guarantee success since I sometimes can hardly keep myself safe from her insanity."

Aria motioned for him to walk ahead without further commenting his words, a frown firmly in place on her face. And Hadrian wisely turned around to walk ahead, down the long corridor into the oppressing darkness, the small sphere of light levitating next to his shoulder, shedding a dim light so he saw where he was going. A few moments later Aria followed him, unwilling to wait in the darkness or worse, being alone with Cassia longer then necessary.

When Cassia finally landed down in the dark corridor she was all alone, the darkness had long swallowed the two teens she had come here with. Not knowing how far ahead Hadrian had already come with Aria in tow, Cassia sped up her steps, cursing herself for waiting too long. She wanted to give the two some more time alone, but apparently they did not stay to talk, but walked ahead into the ruin on their own. Oh well the mission would surely provide her with ample amusement, even if she would have to create some situations on her own. With a devious smirk Cassia disappeared in the darkness herself on the search for her companions.

AN: Oh well so far for the introduction of one of my major OC characters. Aria will play a big role for the story so I hope I can create her as a character that readers will like. How will relationship with Hadrian evolve? What is her secret and why does she hide her real name? If you want to know more about her you will have to read on. But don't waste your time asking questions about it in Reviews and PMs, I won't answer these questions, you will have to wait.

Like my other story here on FF this story will be completely AU, though in this story Harry will be tied much closer to the war against Voldie and his snake lovers. There will also be some more OCs somewhere in the future, but I won't drop two dozen OCs on my readers all at once, I will establish a new character before I will even think about adding another.

I also know that this is also some kind of mild cliff hanger, the mission and what they will find in the ruin will be in the next chapter. I can promise there will be much more action next chapter. I did not continue it here simply because I have an average number of words per chapter and I didn't want this to be a 10k words chapter.

Important OCs so far would be Nero, Cassia, Erica and Aria (damn I realize now that there are quite a lot of names ending on 'a' here).

The other OCs mentioned so far will play their role, but they will not get any real background story. Such unimportant OCs would be people like Pelagius and Aelianus.

Also this will not be a Dumbledore bashing, he will be the same manipulative ass like in canon, but he will not be evil or any such thing.

That is it for now, please continue reading future chapters and leave a Review with your opinion.

CHP5